

EXHIBIT No. 5

 State University of New York

September 11, 2007

Re: Hurgens Pignard

To Honorable Colleen McMahan:

My name is Phara Pignard and I reside at 143 Eagle Street, Albany, NY. I am currently a Graduate student at the University at Albany in the MSW Department and is employed by the State of New York as a Graduate Assistant and Research Assistant.

This letter is on behalf of my brother Hurgens Pignard. I wanted to provide you with a brief description of the kind of man Hurgens is to his family and friends. Hurgens Pignard is an educated, family oriented, hard working, and giving individual whom has always supported his family and friends. He is the oldest of three children from a marriage of forty years. Hurgens is a father of two children (one of whom he adopted). Throughout my entire life, Hurgens has played multiple roles in all of our lives. These roles would consist of being the provider, protector, comforter, and mediator. Although in the past Hurgens has not always made the best decisions for himself, I truly believe that he has learned from his past mistakes.

I am in no way trying to minimize the effectiveness of our judicial system; however, I feel that through the evidence and testimony during the trial it showed that Hurgens Pignard had no involvement in the events that transpired. Based on the above aforementioned, I believe the appropriate ruling should be time served with continuing probation.

As a Social Worker who is actively involved in the community, I realize the importance of family, community, and religious support. My experience as a Social Worker has shown that many of the problems within the African American communities stem from the lack of religious involvement, unstable home (mostly due to lack of father figures), and lack of positive Black role models within the communities. That is why Hurgens Pignard is greatly needed back in our community. Hurgens is actively involved in the church, has been in a stable marriage providing for his family for over ten years, and is a positive role model to young men and women of the community.

I appreciate you taking the time to read my letter. I have faith that you will make the appropriate decision in my brother's sentencing. If there are questions, please feel free to contact me at (845) 893-2339.

Sincerely,



Phara Pignard

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